

Op-302/isp

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17 October 1947

MEMORANDUM TO: Mr. Ralph Block, State Department

Colonel Oliver S. Fisher, AF  
OSG

From: Captain Karl F. Peshmann, Navy Department

Subject: Comments on SWNCC 12/14 as relates to SWNCC 304/6.

1. The Ad Hoc Committee which reported in SWNCC 12/14 studied the problem "to determine the appropriate mechanism to coordinate politico-military matters under the provisions of the National Security Act, 1947, with particular reference to the position of the SWNCC and the Committee of Three".
2. This report leaves many important relationships concerning NSC, SANAG, and the Committee of Three not defined or not defined sharply enough to satisfy a organizational structural configuration adequate to enable realistic activation of psychological warfare in time of war or threat of war as determined by the President as envisaged in SWNCC 304 1/2 and /6.
3. For example: It appears likely that initially the functions of the NSC will be deemed to be, "to advise the President with respect to the integration of domestic, foreign, and military policies relating to the national security so as to enable the military services and the other departments and agencies of the Government to cooperate more effectively in matters involving the national security" in accord with the act. It appears likely that unless NSC advises the President in the premises of requirements, etc. for psychological warfare organization for time of war or threat of war as determined by the President, and further that the President acts favorably in response to their advice, the NSC would not be in position legally "to perform such other functions as the President may direct" and those functions ascribed to the NSC in SWNCC 304/6 as essential for the operation of a P.W.O in time of war, etc.
4. SWNCC 12/14 described the SWNCC: ". . . established by the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy to reconcile and coordinate the action to be taken by the State, War and Navy Departments on matters of common interest and under the guidance of the Secretaries of State, War and Navy establish policies on politico-military questions referred to it." It has worked out that the SWNCC, in practice, functions on the assistant or under secretary level whereas the Committee of Three which meets weekly considers major matters of policy on the Secretary Level.
5. It now appears to me that an assumption by the S.S.E. Committee that the SWNCC level and the Committee of Three level as relates to policy, authority, command, etc. will merge somehow in a new array on the N.S.C. level is unrealistic and untenable at this time. It appears to me we should readjust our evaluations to the proposition that these distinct levels will persist as discrete and separate levels, notwithstanding vertical connections, until such time as reorganization is effected which may further clarify the organization structure.
6. Having submitted their report in SWNCC 12/14 and having received approval of it as amended, the ad hoc Committee's task seems to be wrapped up. No further report by this ad hoc Committee need be expected and their report stands as amended, however incomplete and not adequately definitive for the purposes related to SWNCC 304/6.
7. It remains unclear to me at this time by what steps and measures the clarifications required by para. 7 a. and b. of SWNCC 12/14 may be handled. It seems that the ladder in the executive branch has its rungs in place on the various levels but while the NSC ladder in the advisory branch now has rungs only between the President and the NSC level but the lower reaches of this ladder seem to have no rungs definitely placed.

NAVY review(s) completed.

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8. The ladder of authority now follows the executive branch. It therefore appears to me the SWNCC would be loath to pass on the proposed alternatives in 304/8 which relate to the NSC and could now only make recommendations to the President. It seems to me also that they could not extend their own terms of reference and authority beyond those to which they are now bound and could operate to produce such extensions only by the mechanisms of appropriate recommendations to the President.

9. It appears to me that this presents the problem to the SSE Committee to develop the paper necessary to provide the SWNCC with the appropriate recommendations in the premises of SWNCC 304/8 for their consideration, approval, and transmission to the President for his consideration and action.

10. These comments should not be construed as a comprehensive discussion of the only course of action the Committee may pursue but simply to recast certain views of relations in the light of SWNCC 12/14 and to develop discussion of relations relevant to clearing a blockage which appears to be developing with regard to a decision on the two valued recommendations presented in SWNCC 304/8.

K. F. POEHLMANN,  
Captain, U.S. Navy.